

Submitted online at Regulations.gov, Docket OMB-2022-0014

June 20, 2023

Richard L. Revesz
Administrator
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs

Re: Proposed Revisions to Circular A-4, Regulatory Analysis

Dear Administrator Revesz:

We appreciate the opportunity to provide information to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) on the draft [A-94](#) document on “Guidelines and Discount Rates for Benefit-Cost Analysis of Federal Programs.”

I (Mark Budolfson) am an assistant professor at Rutgers University in environmental health, population-level bioethics, and philosophy.

I (Bob Fischer) am an associate professor of philosophy at Texas State University, a senior research manager at Rethink Priorities, and the director of the Society for the Study of Ethics & Animals.

We are in favor of many of the proposed updates to circular A-94. However, **we urge the Office of Management and Budget to amend A-94 §6.A**, on identifying benefits and costs, **to include effects on animal welfare**.

- **Americans report concern for animal welfare.** 86% of American consumers desire high standards of animal care even if it raises food prices and involves government regulation (Prickett et al. 2010). Moreover, Americans vote to improve animal welfare: in 2008, for instance, 63% of voters in California backed Prop. 2, which prohibits extreme confinement for many farm animals ([Cal. Health & Saf. Code Div 20, Chap 13, §8](#)).
- **Americans alter their spending based on concerns about animal welfare.** Meta-analyses indicate that consumers are willing to pay a price premium for animal welfare generally (Clark et al. 2017; Yang and Renwick 2019). Moreover, when given more granular information about welfare practices, consumers tend to have positive willingness-to-pay for all welfare improvements (Wolf and Tonsor 2017).

- **There are emerging tools to quantify animal welfare.** Some of these tools are based on consumers' willingness-to-pay (Norwood and Lusk 2011; Hsiung and Sunstein 2007). In addition, just as methods have emerged to estimate the intrinsic value of environmental goods (McShane 2017), methods are emerging to estimate the intrinsic value of animal welfare (Budolfson, Fischer, and Scovronick forthcoming).

General Implications for Scope of Analysis, Need for Regulatory Action, and Methods

We note that livestock within the US spend their lives entirely within our borders and experience welfare impacts from our market forces and policy choices (scope of analysis), often suffering large net negative externalities from these forces that are not adequately addressed by analysis or policy (need for federal regulatory action). Just as analyses should include the health and well-being impacts to individual Americans who happen to have zero willingness to pay (e.g., if they do not earn wage incomes at any point during their life), so too the health and well-being impacts to animals must be included as well, and so cannot be dismissed simply on the grounds that those individuals have zero willingness to pay.

Sincerely,

Mark Budolfson

Assistant Professor of Environmental Health Sciences
Center for Population-Level Bioethics
School of Public Health
Rutgers University
mark.budolfson@rutgers.edu

Bob Fischer

Associate Professor
Department of Philosophy
Texas State University
fischer@txstate.edu

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